



## ADOPT-A-HIGHWAY

### Guidelines for Using Mulch

---

Mulch composition, particle size, and method of preparation must comply with the *Caltrans Standard Specifications (July 1999), Section 20-2.08*, and the *Caltrans Standard Special Provisions, Section 20-350*, as summarized below.

Mulch materials produced from pine trees grown in Alameda, Monterey, Santa Clara, Santa Cruz, San Luis Obispo or San Mateo Counties shall not be used. Wherever possible mulch shall be made from green materials. Mulch may consist of any combination of the following products:

- **Green materials** are shrubs, tree trimmings, or clean, processed/previously used wood products (i.e., unpainted pallets) that have been chipped, shredded, or ground. Mulch produced from green trimmings *may* contain leaves or small twigs.
  - Chipping, shredding, grinding, or other method may be used to reduce the particle size green materials. Particle size must conform to either the wood chip or the shredded bark specifications listed below under “Dry Materials.”
  - Green material shall be processed and have reached an internal temperature of 56°C for a minimum of 15 consecutive days. During the processing period, the green material shall have been turned a minimum of 5 times and shall have been cured for 90 days thereafter.
  - Deleterious materials such as rocks, glass, plastics, metals, clods, weeds, weed seeds, coarse objects, sticks larger than the specified particle size, salts, paint, petroleum products, pesticides or other chemical residues that would be harmful to plant or animal life shall not exceed 0.1 percent of the mulch volume.
- **Dry materials** are wood chips, tree bark, or shredded bark.
  - **Wood chips** shall be manufactured from clean wood. Wood chips produced from tree trimmings *shall not* contain leaves or small twigs. The particle size shall be between 12 mm and 80 mm in length, not less than 9 mm in width, and not less than 2 mm in thickness. At least 85 percent, by volume, of wood chips shall conform to the sizes specified.
  - **Shredded bark** shall be a mixture of shredded bark and wood. The particle size shall be between 3 mm and 40 mm in thickness and between 25 mm to 210 mm in length. It shall be free of salt and deleterious materials such as clods, coarse objects and rocks. At least 75 percent, by volume, of shredded bark shall conform to the sizes specified.
  - **Tree bark** shall have a particle size between 12 mm and 40 mm and shall be free of salt and foreign materials, such as clods, coarse objects, sticks, rocks, weeds or weed seeds.

#### Placement of Mulch:

- Mulch must be applied to provide a four- to six-inch layer.
- Mulch should not be placed in drainage facilities or within one foot of the trunks of existing trees and shrubs.